

Feelings mixed on Mayatan Lake development

By Séamus Smyth
Staff Writer

An information session was held this past Saturday at Rainbow Lake Lodge by the Mayatan Lake development group to discuss a possible 70-acre, 200 unit RV resort, that caused some locals to walk out in frustration.

"It will be horrific. It's a money-making business pure and simple. I will fight this until I can't fight this anymore," said local resident Conny Schuster.

Schuster along with others plan on getting Environment Canada involved to ensure that the development does not get off the ground.

Developer John McNab held the information session to determine where the public stood, and although he sensed discontent, he felt it was due to residents not being aware of what was going on.

"We have been following all the rules. The province is not against it. They want smart development. We know that the first input is always negative," said McNab.

McNab envisions an on route campground and a destination campground and mentioned this plan is still very much in the preliminary stages. He explained the goal of the park is to provide a campground that everyone can benefit from.

"We are trying to provide a place for recreation not just for the wealthy, but a place where you don't have to dish out a lot of money to experience camping in

Alberta," said McNab.

He hopes that the resort will eliminate "squatters," people who camp on crown reserve grounds without permission, and mentioned that with a growing population in Alberta, many people are on the lookout for new places to camp.

"The population in Alberta has doubled in the past 13 years. Eighteen per cent of all people in Alberta currently have an RV. These people need a place to go camping," he said.

Another disgruntled resident, whose land will be the closest in proximity to the possible RV park, Phillip Roeder, bought his property three years ago because of the tranquility and quiet neighbourhood that Mayatan Lake provided.

"If they build this thing I will sell my land. The developers said there are not enough RV places in Parkland County; Wabamun is a big one and it's half full. There is no need for another RV park," said Roeder.

Roeder lived in Germany for 54 years before moving to Parkland County and couldn't get over how beautiful the property in the Mayatan area currently is.

"It was so overcrowded in Germany. This is beautiful here. The lake is small, there are plenty of birds, from loons to pelicans," said Roeder. Along with the possible destruction of the environment, Roeder and Schuster both stressed their concern for the wildlife, specifically the birds, in the area.

Jackfish Lake resident and former councilor Ken Darby, who is in favour of the development said

that a similar situation occurred 12 years ago, where many thought that nature would be disturbed when Rainbow Beach Estates began development.

"Of course none of those things we feared materialized. Including

the disappearance of wildlife. This development is not going to chase one pelican, one duck, one goose, one heron, one rabbit or one squirrel away."

Darby said that judging from the meeting held, there were only a few

people who were vocal about their discontent. He continued saying that he hoped the present Parkland council would not be swayed by the efforts of those opposed to the development.

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Quality of life may be an issue with potential development

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"To have something like this denied based on an impassioned plea from even six people, is the kind of thing that can happen with an inexperienced council. I don't think it is fair to the people of Parkland County that such a decision could be influenced like that."

Mayor of Parkland County, Rodney Shaigec, who attended the meeting as well, felt this was an opportunity for residents to get involved in the developments in their community.

"This is an opportunity for residents to become aware of the importance of being engaged in the community," said Shaigec. Shaigec said he understood where the concerned residents were coming from.

"You have residents here that have chosen to live out here rather than in the city. It's a quality of life issue," he continued.



Submitted Photo

Mayatan Lake residents are faced with the question of whether they wish to have an RV lot built in the area.

Schuster emphasized her concerns over the quality of life, citing a possible mass influx of people entering the area.

"How can you control 200 units? Every unit accom-

panies four people, which equals 800 people. It will take away from our quality of life," said Schuster.

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